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INFO RUEHJK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 000240

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE AND IPA. NSC FOR SHAPIRO/PASCUAL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/04/2019

TAGS: KWBG PHUM ASEC IS PBTS PREL

SUBJECT: GOI TO RELOCATE MIGRON SETTLERS

REF: A. 08 JERUSALEM 2121

1B. 08 JERUSALEM 2087

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, per reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary. According to a February 4 report in Ha'aretz, the GOI will relocate settlers from the Migron outpost to a new location one kilometer east of the Adam settlement, northeast of Jerusalem. ConGen previously reported (reflets) that the Yesha Council and the GOI agreed to relocate Migron settlers to the location of Adam. PA sources called the GOI plan "a major violation of the Roadmap" and urged the USG to object. The Ha'aretz report is the first indication that the new location is one kilometer from the built-up area of Adam. If that is correct, the construction will likely meet USG criteria for a new settlement, the first approved by the GOI since 1992. End summary.

Relocation of Migron Outpost

12. (U) Haaretz reported on February 4 that Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak approved a plan to construct 50 single-family units in the "Binyamin region" for the 45 settler families in Migron outpost. According to the Ha'aretz report, construction would be more than one kilometer east of the built-up area of Adam settlement. The plan reportedly includes an additional 1,400 units to be constructed later. (Note: Adam is northeast of Jerusalem, just beyond the security barrier. End note.)

13. (C) As reported reflets, the GOI and the Yesha Council reached agreement in November 2008 to relocate settlers from the Migron outpost to the eastern side of Adam settlement.

PA and Settler Reactions

14. (C) Advisor to the Prime Minister, Hatem Abdel Qader told Polspec on February 4 that the MOI plan is "a major violation of the Roadmap" that "undermines the standing of the PA domestically" and "shows that the peace process is dead." Abdel Qader said the U.S. should "stand up" against establishing new settlements in exchange for evacuating outposts. Advisor to the Prime Minister Hasan Abu Libdeh called the GOI plan a "strong message" to U.S. Special Envoy George Mitchell, and suggested that Barak is using Migron to gain votes from the Israeli right wing in the upcoming elections.

15. (C) Yesha Council Chairman Danny Dayan told Poloff on February 4 that the area planned for the Migron settlers is "within the boundaries of Adam and not a new settlement." Dayan dismissed the significance of the projected 1,400 new units, saying, "no one can predict whether or not permits will be approved for more than the 50 units planned for the first stage of construction, in the next two or three years."

16. (C) Note: To meet the longstanding USG definition of a new settlement, the new construction must meet at least two of the following three criteria: be at least one kilometer from the built-up area of another settlement; have a different ideological affiliation from the nearest settlement; or have independent access to a major road. If the information in Ha'aretz is correct that the new location is one kilometer from the built-up area of Adam, that would meet one of the criteria. Settlers from Migron are known for their hard-line ideology, and Adam's non-ideological settlers live in a "bedroom community" and generally work in Jerusalem; that different ideological affiliation would meet a second criteria. Post has seen no information indicating whether or not this new location would have independent access to a major road. End note.

17. (C) Comment: Aside from the issue of whether this construction constitutes a new settlement, this reported plan is inconsistent with the Roadmap in two respects. First, the Roadmap requires the GOI to dismantle outposts erected since March 2001, not to relocate them elsewhere in the West Bank. And second, the Roadmap calls for a freeze on all settlement activity (including natural growth). End comment.

WALLES